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UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 000413

SIPDIS

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HANOI FOR PAO/APAO; ECON-CPIERANGELO  
BANGKOK FOR REGIONAL HUB ENVIRONMENT OFFICER TED OSIUS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [ECON](#) [SEVN](#)

SUBJECT: PAS/ECON HO CHI MINH CITY EVALUATION OF APRIL 23, 2002 EARTH DAY ROUNDTABLE

1. Summary: At our second annual Earth Day roundtable, the ConGen's economic and public affairs sections joined efforts to invite two U.S. company country directors to discuss environmental protection, corporate responsibility and national development. Two Vietnamese economics publications ran articles based on the discussion, in which 10 prominent environmental scholars, writers and business leaders participated. End summary.

2. At the roundtable, representatives from CDM and SELCO (Solar Energy Light Company) discussed how their companies are improving wastewater processing (CDM) and rural electrification (SELCO). The CDM manager also discussed international efforts to develop Vietnam's infrastructure, and how pursuing environmentally sound policies now will have significant benefits in the long run. The CDM representative noted that a recent World Bank grant has drawn the attention of policymakers and the educated public to the problems of open sewage and contamination of the waterways.

3. The director of SELCO, whose company was recognized in 2001 by Secretary Powell with the State Department's Award for Corporate Excellence, discussed his firm's efforts to electrify rural areas through solar power. He emphasized the importance of using renewable energy sources and skyrocketing energy demands in Vietnam.

4. The director of Saigon Hi-tech Park talked about the organization's recycling of natural resources and its energy-efficient power generating facility. Other scholars and business people focused on raising public awareness, and on avoiding the problems of other developing countries by implementing an eco-friendly energy policy now, rather than later.

5. The Vietnam Economic Times (VET) and Agriculture ("Nong Nghiep") ran articles on the roundtable. Both pieces covered the discussion themes, and VET had a sidebar interview with the director of CDM. "Nong Nghiep's" article focused on SELCO's projects and the role of Vietnam's agricultural and rural development bank in providing financing for families in isolated areas who are installing SELCO's solar electric systems.

YAMAUCHI.